

Techniques for Preparation and Presentation

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Think of your talk as a speech triangle - three aspects of every speaking situation:

1. The speech itself - the content.
2. You, the speaker - your mind, body and voice that delivers the speech.
3. The audience - the target at which your talk is aimed.

Preparation

1. Use an A-B-A form. Introduce your subject in Part A, develop it with the students in Part B, and restate it in the summarization or repetition of Part A.
2. Select an approach about which YOU are enthusiastic. There is nothing in the world that will do more for you than enthusiasm. Thomas A. Edison felt this way about it: "When a man dies if he can pass enthusiasm along to his children, he has left them an estate of incalculable value.,, Your enthusiasm will infect your young listeners.
3. Seating at the Concert - Remember to tailor your presentation to where the students will be seated. If the students are seated on the main floor, do not tell them to watch for the percussion or brass because they will not be able to see them very well. You can find something to praise in each section of seats, including the Gallery. The first to arrive at Orchestra Hall are put in the front of each section. Except for the Box tier, there is no reserved seating.
4. Narrow the subject to important points. Don't tell them ALL you know the first time you meet. Fit the information you have within the framework of the experience they will have at the Concert.
5. Organize your material carefully and logically so that one idea leads naturally into the next idea.
6. Use examples and illustrations. Make certain as you begin your planning that you know exactly what these will be, where they are obtainable, and how you will insert them.
7. Discuss your subject at every opportunity with family and friends to enlarge your perspective and crystallize your thoughts.
8. Use simple language - REACH out to the children at THEIR level. Make them partners in your talk. If you use any technical or unfamiliar words, define them, phoneticize them, pronounce them and WAIT for the youngsters to repeat the pronunciation. If the idea you present is complicated, use analogies or different words to help your young listeners understand.

9. Time it!! Not once, but again and again! Allow time and flexibility enough for discussion without losing the main thought. If your intention is to lead the youngsters in exploring, discovering and expressing, this will take time but it is essential to their learning. Take the time.
10. Rehearse it!! Conjure up a mental picture of a group of children in a learning situation; select ONE and talk to HIM or HER - for in talking directly and personally to ONE, you talk to the whole group with such feeling and empathy that each child feels: "Wow! She's talking to ME!" Watch the child's eyes light up!
11. And now for the two principal colors that will energize your delivery, namely your VOICE and DICTION:
 1. Remember that enthusiasm comes from the HEART and not from the LUNGS. It is JOYOUSNESS from the inside, not SHOUTING from the outside.
 2. Modulate your voice so that it is warm and natural. A high-pitched, thin voice reflects tension and will limit the effectiveness of your rapport with your audience.
 3. Practice speaking in front of a mirror. Deliver a one-minute impromptu talk on anything that comes to mind and try to be convincing. Take a deep breath, smile, look at your audience and enunciate clearly and at an even pace, not unnaturally slowly, yet not too rapidly.
 4. Learn to use your diaphragm like a singer does. Speak on the breath from there, not from your neck, throat or chest. Practice saying out loud, with rolling resonance, words like ocean, alone, along, how, etc., feeling vibrations as you pronounce them. Take a deep breath, and rhythmically and clearly say the entire alphabet - or as far as you can get on ONE breath; if you are inclined to slur words you are speaking too fast and unrhythmically. To forcibly slow down your delivery, practice out loud words that begin with "th" and words of three, four, or even five and six syllables CLEARLY!!

On the Day and Time of Your Presentation:

1. Begin the day brightly! Today you may well spark the tinder of a child's mind by introducing him to the joys of music. Anticipate this privilege with JOY!
2. Pre-eminent is the children's contact with YOU, a warm vital HUMAN being. So forget your nerves and smile confidently, walk slowly and erectly, but above all, EAGERLY!
3. If you are relaxed (or seem to be) and friendly, the children will more likely respond to you freely, openly and unselfconsciously.
4. Encourage each child to respond but do not insist upon it, or embarrass the child. Not every child likes every piece of music. The child is embarking on a road of discovery

and you can make this a pleasurable start. Speak comfortably and clearly in a well-modulated voice so that each child can hear you easily.

5. If you appear to enjoy what you are doing and convey this to the students, you will have accomplished a giant first step toward their enjoyment of the concert.
6. Here are some "do-it-yourself" projects you can suggest that the children do at the concert itself:

Listen to and watch the conductor

Count the number of players in the strings, brass and woodwind families.

How many percussion players in the entire concert? Does the number and kind differ for each work on the program?

Recognize a theme, and identify it when it is repeated.

Recognize a specific rhythm pattern and identify it when it is repeated.

Chart your reactions to the music. Do you feel differently about each piece?

What was your favorite piece in the program? Why? Be prepared to tell me when I come for a follow-up visit after the concert.

7. Remember to take a few minutes at the end of your presentation to **SUMMARIZE** what you have said. This will help you drive home the points or steps you have covered in your talk.
8. **FINALLY:** In music, a CODA represents those few measures tacked on to the end of a composition in order to make a more effective termination. Beethoven was a master "Coda writer," emphatic and imaginative. May I suggest that you make a successful, emphatic Coda to your talk by leaving the youngsters eagerly and joyfully anticipating the concert they are to hear.